

Are you feeling anxious about school?

Worrying or anxiety is a normal feeling that we all experience from time to time. It can even keep us safe from harm or help us perform in difficult situations. However, sometimes anxiety or excessive worrying can become a problem especially when it stops us doing what we want or need to do.

Many children and young people worry about school. This is normal. Anxieties are part of life and learning to deal with them is part of growing up. However sometimes our feelings can make us not want to attend school. If you have high levels of anxiety and worry about attending school you may need some additional support to help you manage these feelings.

When you think about school are you?

Bad tempered

Feeling down

Worried

Struggling to sleep

Feeling ill or
pretending to feel
ill

Worrying about
friendship

Feeling unsure of
yourself

Scared



You are not on your own. We all feel like this from time to time because of things that happen in our life at home, at school or elsewhere.

There may be some things at school that can make you feel this way, such as:



Bullying

Feeling too different to other people

Changing schools

Pressure to achieve your target grades



Not understanding or coping with school work

Worried about your appearance

Worried about getting changed for PE games

Anxious about exams and tests

Not being good at sports

Not getting on with some teachers

Problems with friendships

Don't like the noise in school

There may also be some things outside of school that can make you feel this way, such as:



Death of somebody important to you

Parents arguing or splitting up

A parent who is ill

Members of your family feeling worried, depressed or sad

Birth of a new brother or sister

Death or loss of a pet

New people moving into your home

Difficulties in getting to school

Parents not understanding your feelings



What happens when you don't attend school?

It is very important to try to overcome these difficulties as soon as possible. Sometimes you might feel that staying at home is the best thing to do as it makes you feel better.

However, the more time you spend out of school the more you miss out on lessons and the learning gets harder. You also miss out on seeing friends which means keeping friendships becomes more difficult. This increases feelings of worry about going to school and makes it harder to return. This can be seen in the diagram.




It is important to let an adult know if you are worried about anything in school or at home and get the help to make it better rather than let things get worse and get stuck.

What do I do if I feel like this?

Most importantly, talk to somebody. This could be your parents, an adult at school, other family members or a friend.

Think about the things that are worrying you, write a list or draw them then order them from most worried about to least worried about.

Most Worried	
Least Worried About	

What can your school do to help you?

Find an adult at school you trust and talk to them, they should listen and believe you. They can work with you and your parents to help find out what things are worrying you and what you and they can do to help you. Things they could do include:

Key person to talk to

Alter your timetable

Find a safe space for you to go to

Help with school work or friendships

These actions could be written up into a support plan so that you, your parents and school know what actions have been agreed to help support you.

What can I do to get back to school?

If your worries are so great that you are not attending school it is important that you work with your school and your parents to help you get back to attending school as soon as possible. Things you can do to help include:

- ⇒ **Take part in the planning of how you will go back to school. Work with your parents and teachers to think of things that will help you.**
- ⇒ **Think about a time that you did cope with a worry. What did you do then?**
 - ⇒ **Keep in contact with your friends and what is happening at school.**
- ⇒ **Catch up on some of the work that you may have missed before you go back.**
- ⇒ **Take little steps to get back into the routine – don't expect that everything will get back to normal or will be okay immediately.**
 - ⇒ **Take that chance! Once you are at school, it may not seem as bad.**
- ⇒ **Acknowledge the steps you have taken and celebrate the small successes!**

When you are feeling worried...

Your whole body reacts when you are anxious.

Scared

Shortness of breath

Skin goes pale

**Feeling tired,
little energy**

**Thoughts racing,
difficulty sleeping**

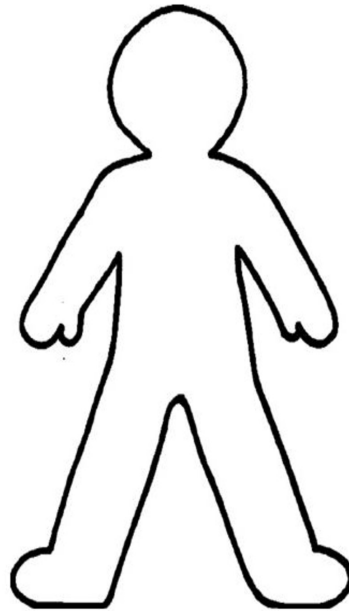
**Your heart
beats faster**

**Dry throat
or mouth**

**Muscle aches
and head-aches**

Your muscles tense

**Poor digestion,
stomach aches,
bowel problems**



Try to notice when you start to feel any of the signs above and stop to take a moment. There are many different strategies to help you feel relaxed and calm when you are feeling stressed or anxious and you will need to find the ones that work for you. To get you started, try some of these...

Try relaxing your body

1. Sit or lie somewhere quiet and comfortable
2. Stretch out your arms and make a fist, then relax
3. Push your legs out, wiggle your toes, and then relax
4. Shut your eyes tight and pull a scrunched up face, and then relax



Try calm breathing

1. Take a slow breath in through your nose for about 4 seconds
2. Hold it for 1 or 2 seconds
3. Slowly let it out through your mouth for about 4 seconds
4. Wait 5 - 7 seconds before taking another breath



Try physical exercise



This increases your heart rate and releases endorphins that make you feel good. Running, going to the gym, cycling, skateboarding, surfing, horse riding, swimming or team sports such as cricket or netball are all great exercise. Choose one you love and build your exercise routine around that.

Think balanced thoughts



If you find yourself thinking a negative thought or worry a lot of the time e.g. 'I will fail all my exams because I am stupid'. Try thinking of a more balanced or positive thought instead e.g. 'If I work hard, I'll do ok in my exam'. Every time you notice your self thinking the negative thought stop and tell yourself the positive thought.



Try visualisation

1. Close your eyes
2. Take slow deep breaths in and out
3. Think of your favourite place, maybe somewhere that you go on holiday
4. Focus on the place and picture yourself there

Where to get further help Locally In Salford

Wuu2

A website for young people in Salford aged 11-19 with activities, events, news and videos

<https://www.wuu2.info/>

IYSS

Integrated and Targeted Youth Support Services (IYSS), offers youth work and targeted sessions, alongside a range of specialist projects for young people

<https://www.salford.gov.uk/children-and-families/youth-service/youth-work-in-the-community/>

42nd Street

Supporting young people with their emotional wellbeing and mental health. If you're aged 12 to 25 and you're struggling, they can help.

42nd Street are a charity based in Greater Manchester. They offer a range of individual therapeutic support, learning opportunities, groups and creative activities for young people, encouraging them to find their voice, develop new skills, have fun and demonstrate that they can manage their mental health and well-being to achieve their full potential.

<https://www.42ndstreet.org.uk/>

Phone **0161 228 7321** (Mon – Fri 9.30am – 5.00pm) Email

theteam@42ndstreet.org.uk

Salford's Local Offer

The Local Offer provides information on what support services are available in Salford for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their parents/carers. <https://directory.salford.gov.uk/kb5/salford/directory/localoffer.page?localofferchannel=0>

Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership – Resource Hub

Free access to a useful range of documents and films around mental health, includes a COVID-19 specific section.

<https://hub.gmhsc.org.uk/mental-health/>

Where to get further help (Continued)

For support around anxiety and stress, the following services are currently available to young people in Salford:

Kooth

Online mental wellbeing support which is free, safe and anonymous. Includes access to online tips and advice from other young people and the Kooth Team, discussion boards, a chat service and online journal.

<https://www.kooth.com/>

Shout 24

24/7 text service, free on all major mobile networks, for anyone in crisis anytime, anywhere. A place to go if you're struggling to cope and you need immediate help. Text 85258.

<https://www.giveusashout.org/>

SilverCloud

Online therapy programme proven to help with stress, anxiety, low-mood and depression, with courses specifically adapted for young people.

<https://www.silvercloudhealth.com/uk/our-solution>

Nationally Childline

Childline comforts, advises and protects children 24 hours a day and offers free confidential counselling.

Phone **0800 1111** (24 hours) www.childline.org

Young Minds

Young Minds is the UK's leading charity championing the wellbeing and mental health of young people www.youngminds.org.uk

The Mix

The Mix provides information, support and listening for people under 25.

Phone **0808 808 4994** (24 hours) www.themix.org.uk